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Chairperson: Ms. Intelmann ..... (Estonia)
later: Mr. Fonseca (Vice-Chairperson) ..... (Brazil)
later: Ms. Intelmann (Chairperson) ..... (Estonia)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Agenda item 53: Sustainable development

(a) Implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (A/61/93, 126 and 258; A/C.2/61/4)

(b) Follow-up to and implementation of the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (A/61/72-E/2006/54, A/61/75-E/2006/49 and A/61/76-E/2006/51; A/61/181, 268 and 277)

(c) International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (A/61/229 and Corr.1; A/C.2/61/CRP.1)

(d) Protection of global climate for present and future generations of mankind (A/61/225)

(f) Convention on Biological Diversity (A/61/225)

(g) Report of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme on its ninth special session (A/61/25 (Supp. No. 25) and 322)

1. **Mr. Civili** (Assistant Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Inter-Agency Affairs) said that the award of the Nobel Peace Prize for efforts to achieve poverty eradication and sustainable development highlighted the inextricable link between development and peace. The concept of sustainable development had evolved into an overarching and internationally agreed framework for promoting economic growth, advancing social development and protecting the environment. Government leaders had reaffirmed their determination to ensure the full and timely realization of sustainable development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals, at the 2005 World Summit. The General Assembly continued to play an important role in guiding global efforts in that regard.

2. Sustainable development had become a truly global undertaking. While national Governments remained key actors, a wide range of other actors — civil society, business, industry and local authorities — were playing a growing implementation role. While many Governments had taken the lead in moving implementation forward, action had been taken locally too. An increasing number of municipal governments were adopting initiatives in such areas as fighting climate change and, through a global network of 675 local governments, many cities had established greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets and were implementing climate protection policies. The business sector was increasingly realizing that social and environmental issues affected long-term profitability and sometimes impacted on shareholder value. Progress was also being made on education, which was key for sustainable development. A growing number of undergraduate, graduate and doctorate-level courses were being offered in universities in both developing and developed countries, enabling tomorrow's leaders to be trained in sustainable development.

3. The Commission on Sustainable Development had been reorienting its work in line with emerging implementation trends and as part of wider United Nations reform. The General Assembly provided overall policy guidance, the Economic and Social Council focused on its system-wide central coordinating function, and the Commission advanced implementation through its two-year thematic cycle. As Governments, civil society and the business community were taking concrete initiatives, they expected the United Nations to produce concrete results and have a real impact on the ground. That expectation had been driving the work of the Commission, which was currently concentrating on energy, industry, air pollution, atmosphere and climate change.

4. Access to modern energy services was critical to achieving the Millennium Development Goals. Pursuit of energy efficiency would lower energy consumption, enhance energy savings, reduce greenhouse gas emissions and increase industrial competitiveness. Renewable energy played an important role in that regard. Most countries would continue to rely mainly on fossil fuels, demand for which was expected to keep growing. The challenges were, therefore, not only environmental but affected economic growth and society as a whole, which in turn impacted on the environment.

5. While there was no single solution, sustainable development provided the best strategy for tackling

those challenges. Developing and disseminating advanced clean energy technologies would be a priority and sharing such technologies with developing countries, with due consideration for intellectual property rights, must be an integral component of any global strategy to combat climate change. Increased financial resources, including ODA, must be mobilized to help developing countries meet growing energy demand, invest in advanced clean energy and low carbon technologies, and cover the costs of adaptation to climate change. Small island developing States were especially vulnerable to climate change; their resilience needed to be built and their vulnerability reduced.

6. While emerging trends in sustainable development were encouraging, the need to expedite progress on implementation remained urgent. Partnerships would maximize the impact of action and develop tools to help marshal new resources and new means of implementation. He called on the Committee to focus on providing strategically oriented political guidance on how to move implementation forward.

7. **Mr. Egeland** (Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on implementation of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (A/61/229 and Corr.1) and the Global Survey of Early Warning Systems (A/C.2/61/CRP.1), noted that 2006 was above average in terms of number of disasters. By August, there had been 267 reported disasters affecting 91 million people. That was more than 30 disasters above average. The situation could become even worse. Earthquakes threatened to take more lives and destroy more livelihoods, mainly because of greater urban concentration and greater vulnerability, while the El Niño phenomenon currently developing in the Pacific might bring more droughts and floods in the coming year. One of the most feared results of global warming — greater intensity and frequency of extreme weather events — seemed to have already arrived.

8. However, as the Secretary-General's report showed, there were signs that Governments, organizations and citizens recognized the problem and were increasingly taking steps to reduce disaster risk. The Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters had created a paradigm shift in the way in which the challenge posed by natural hazards was addressed. The report highlighted many examples of efforts to build community resilience. Risk awareness and education were also on national agendas, with initiatives to build knowledge of local hazards and risks through primary and secondary education. At the international level, national concerns were being matched by new thinking. Disaster risk reduction policies and practices offered proven win-win approaches for adapting to changing climate risks. The Global Survey of Early Warning Systems, meanwhile, contained strong recommendations for implementing a globally comprehensive early warning system.

9. To make real progress, States must abide by their commitments under the Hyogo Framework. Noting the acknowledgement by States that they bore primary responsibility for effective implementation of that Framework, he said that an increasing number of countries were engaging actively. Since the report had been written, the number of Governments that had officially nominated focal points for implementation had risen to 87. Such focal points enhanced multi-stakeholder as well as regional and international coordination. Noting that momentum must be underpinned by greater investment, he called on bilateral and multilateral financing institutions to provide the necessary resources and welcomed the new facility created by the World Bank.

10. It was also important to strengthen global and regional capacity. Over the past year, he had overseen the strengthening of the Strategy system. There had also been intensive consultations with Governments through the Strategy Support Group and at the Economic and Social Council's 2006 substantive session. The strengthened arrangements would provide an evaluation of progress on disaster risk reduction; improve the coherence of international action through closer collaboration and teamwork; and systematically advocate risk and vulnerability reduction and share knowledge among practitioners and experts. The main forum of the strengthened arrangements was the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction, which would enable a wider range of partners to participate in providing technical guidance and support to the Strategy system. He looked forward to the active engagement of national experts in the preparation and conduct of the first session of the Global Platform, to be held in June 2007.

11. He expressed appreciation to all those Governments that supported the United Nations Trust Fund for Disaster Reduction, but strongly invited them

to strengthen the size and predictability of their commitments. The Strategy secretariat did not receive any funding from the United Nations regular budget. He hoped that the Committee would be making recommendations in that regard.

12. **Mr. de Boer** (Executive Secretary, United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change), introducing his report on the work of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention (contained in document A/61/225), said that international cooperation on climate change had made important advances over the past year with the entry into force of the Kyoto Protocol, the Gleneagles meeting of the Group of Eight, the 2005 World Summit and, most recently, the United Nations Climate Change Conference held in Montreal in late 2005, serving as the eleventh session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention and the first Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol. At that Meeting, the Parties had adopted 36 decisions, approved compliance procedures and elected the members of the compliance committee.

13. Of the Protocols' three market-based mechanisms, the clean development mechanism had seen exponential growth over the past year. The number of registered projects had grown to 356 by October 2006, with over 800 more in the pipeline. The latter were expected to generate over 1.4 billion tons of emission reductions by 2012, while it was estimated that the carbon market would reach $30 billion by the end of 2006. However, carbon markets needed long-term certainty beyond 2012.

14. The next United Nations Climate Change Conference, to be held in Nairobi, was expected to decide to make joint implementation fully operational as the second project-based mechanism, the infrastructure for which had been put in place in 2006. Work was also under way to further strengthen the clean development mechanism and broaden its sectoral and geographical coverage. Many African countries, in particular, needed to be able to participate more fully in the mechanism. The secretariat of the Framework Convention was working with partners in the United Nations system to increase capacity-building efforts and engage key actors, most importantly in the private sector. In Nairobi, the Parties were expected to reach agreement on the activities to be carried out until 2008 under the five-year work programme for the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice on impacts, vulnerability and adaptation to climate change. They were also expected to make recommendations to the Global Environment Facility (GEF) on issues to be improved in the context of the review of the financial mechanism. A critical vehicle for supporting activities in developing countries was the Adaptation Fund, which was to be financed partly by the proceeds from the clean development mechanism; political agreement in Nairobi on management of the Fund was key to making progress on adaptation. A decision was expected in Nairobi on the results of the review of the process to review the technology transfer framework and the terms of reference for the Expert Group on Technology Transfer.

15. The two-track approach to discussions to determine the future directions of global action on climate change involved the establishment of an open-ended ad hoc working group under the Kyoto Protocol and the initiation of a dialogue process under the Convention. Both those initiatives would need to consider long-term mitigation and adaptation efforts and how to lower the cost of implementing commitments in the future and use those savings to green economic growth, stimulate technology flows, build capacity and pay for adaptation, perhaps leading to a self-financing climate compact.

16. Recalling the decision taken in Montreal to continue the institutional linkage of the secretariat of the Framework Convention to the United Nations until such time as a review was deemed necessary by either the Conference of the Parties or the General Assembly, he said that the secretariat of the Framework Convention was working with its United Nations system partners to mainstream climate change into wider development policy. Climate change was integrally linked to sustainable development and extended into the economic sphere. Adaptation to climate change was linked to disaster reduction efforts, food security, water availability and population health, while climate change mitigation was related to efforts to ensure energy security. The challenge would be met only by addressing the broader context, and that required global action and leadership.

17. Such leadership was sorely needed. According to the International Energy Agency (IEA), $17 trillion needed to be invested in the energy sector in the next 25 to 30 years in order to achieve economic growth and poverty eradication. Such investment must be sustainable. In the next 5 to 10 years, 40 per cent of the

world's power-generating capacity would be replaced and the decisions to be taken would be the international community's legacy for the next 30 to 50 years. According to a leading economist, if the wrong choices were made, climate change would cause a market failure larger than that experienced during the First and Second World Wars and the Depression combined, delaying attainment of the Millennium Development Goals for several more generations. Everyone recognized the issue and knew that solutions were within reach. Leadership meant not waiting for others to act first, but assuming common but differentiated responsibilities.

18. **Mr. Djoghlaf** (Executive Secretary, Convention on Biological Diversity), introducing his report (contained in document A/61/225), said that the loss of biodiversity continued unabated. Three species disappeared every hour and 20 hectares of forest every minute. According to the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, climate change was a root cause of biodiversity loss. Humanity was on the eve of one of the greatest species extinctions since the beginning of life on Earth, and the first generated by humans. At the World Summit on Sustainable Development held in Johannesburg in 2002, Heads of State and Government had undertaken to substantially reduce the rate of biodiversity loss by 2010. According to the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, that objective was achievable, provided the international community redoubled its efforts.

19. That call had been heard. He mentioned, in particular, the decision taken at the third meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety regarding documentation accompanying shipments of living modified organisms intended for direct use as food or feed or for processing, making the Biosafety Protocol fully operational; the adoption at the eighth meeting of the Conference of the Parties of measures ushering in an enhanced implementation phase of the Convention; the decision by the President of Brazil to place 6.4 million hectares of the Amazon rainforest under environmental protection; the establishment of a Heads of Agencies Task Force on the 2010 Biodiversity Target; the decision by 10 major botanical gardens to join forces in the Convention's enhanced implementation phase; the decision taken at the eighth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, held in Curitiba, to conclude negotiations on the international regime on access to genetic resources and benefit-sharing by 2010; the call made by over 122 Ministers in Curitiba for biodiversity to be integrated into the development sector; the Secretary-General's proposal that the 2010 biodiversity target should be included in Millennium Development Goal 7; the request by the President of the Group of 77 that a multi-year programme of action should be adopted to promote South-South cooperation for implementation of the Convention; the adoption at the Conference on Biodiversity in European Development Cooperation, held in Paris in September 2006, of the Message from Paris, integrating biodiversity into European development cooperation; and, lastly, the recent decision by Timor-Leste to deposit its instrument of ratification, thus becoming the 189th party to the Convention. Noting that the Convention needed to be universal and that no State could afford to be a mere observer when it came to protecting life on earth, he called on those States that had not yet done so to join the Convention. The General Assembly was urged to proclaim 2010 the International Year of Biodiversity.

20. **Mr. Obermeyer** (United Nations Environment Programme), speaking on behalf of the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), said that the sustainable use of natural resources was a prerequisite for ensuring a sound development path for mankind. On Ecological Debt Day on 9 October, it had been announced that for the remainder of 2006 the rate of consumption of natural resources would exceed the planet's ability to produce them. Natural resources would simply not be able to provide economic benefits indefinitely. The decline in ecosystem services had affected the well-being of people everywhere, but mainly the most vulnerable populations. It had also led to insecurity in areas where competition for scarce resources exacerbated the effects of poverty.

21. Climate change increasingly produced extreme weather-related disasters, and the frequency of such occurrences would increase. Many more people, mostly poor, lived in environments that were exposed to natural disasters. The continued demand for raw materials by newly industrialized countries had placed further strain on the environment, despite wide acknowledgement that current unsustainable production and consumption patterns needed to be altered.

22. He highlighted some key issues related to the outcome of the ninth special session of the UNEP Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum and the question of universal membership of that body, with special reference to the endorsement of the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM), and the participants' focus on the environmental aspects of energy and tourism. In his report on the question of universal membership (A/61/322), the Secretary-General had concluded that further reflection should be accorded to the issue, once the reform of United Nations environmental activities had been more fully discussed. In the few months since the Executive Director had assumed office, UNEP had initiated a number of internal reforms aimed at becoming more responsive to its mandate, as well as to the needs of member States. The Programme had endeavoured to establish strategic partnerships with other United Nations entities in order to collectively ensure environmental sustainability and a strategic presence in the countries in which UNEP operated. Partnership with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and other agencies was rapidly developing and, in the case of UNDP, would involve the creation of a joint poverty and environment centre in Nairobi, collaboration on the Global Environment Facility (GEF), greater harmonization of financial and administrative systems, and cooperation in the compilation of the next Human Development Report .

23. The implementation of the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity-building had been mainstreamed throughout the UNEP work programme for the current biennium and fully integrated into the proposed programme of work and budget for the period 2008-2009. Furthermore, UNEP had begun discussions with Governments on proposals to raise the policy relevance of the Forum.

24. At its twenty-fourth session, the Governing Council was expected to discuss economic governance. In that context, the Executive Director looked forward to the report of the Secretary-General on the High-level Panel on United Nations System-wide Coherence in the Areas of Development, Humanitarian Assistance and the Environment, and the resumption of the work of the Informal Consultative Process on the Institutional Framework for United Nations Environmental Activities. The deliberations of the General Assembly would be crucial in establishing institutional road maps for meeting the challenges of environmental deterioration, and setting operational guidelines for the improvement of environmental capacity-building and conservation, and the availability of green technologies.

25. **Ms. Zia** (South Africa), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, called on developed countries to cooperate with countries of the South in research and development activities, in order to facilitate the transfer of appropriate and advanced technology to improve the access of the poor to technology, and to boost the capacity of developing countries to develop environmentally sound technology.

26. The organization of work of the fifteenth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development and its preparatory meeting should reflect the decision taken during the eleventh session of the Commission to treat all the issues identified in Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation as equally important. Enough time should be allocated for negotiations and, to that end, the document under negotiation should be circulated to participants no later than the beginning of the session.

27. A strong political will and sense of national ownership was vital to the effective implementation of the Mauritius Strategy, and the resources available for implementation should be scaled up. The Group of 77 and China called on the international community to provide the necessary support and resources to transform the vulnerability of small island developing States into strength, creativity, resilience and leadership.

28. Developing countries had become increasingly disaster-prone and additional support was needed. Development partners could help them to set appropriate regulations for reaching the objectives in five priorities identified in the Hyogo Framework for Action.

29. The Group of 77 and China reaffirmed the need to address the adverse effects of climate change, and especially the adaptation of developing countries, which needed increased know-how and enhanced capacity to implement international commitments and derive greater benefits from the clean development mechanism. Developed countries were urged to ratify the Kyoto Protocol and intensify their efforts to ensure its effective implementation. The industrialized countries must fulfil their commitment to reducing greenhouse gas emissions. International cooperation

should be accelerated, especially through the mechanism.

30. The majority of States parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity were also members of the Group of 77 and they fully recognized the crucial role of biodiversity in their development. The Group attached the highest importance to the speedy, balanced and mutually supportive implementation of the objectives of the Convention and welcomed the recent decisions pertaining to implementation of instruments governing the environment. It also supported the proposal to designate 2010 as a year in which to commemorate the protection of international biodiversity, and welcomed the convening of an expert group to draft a work plan on South-South cooperation.

31. In conclusion, the Group expressed support for the UNEP Governing Council and its decisions, and looked forward to the implementation of the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management. It called on the international community to provide the necessary financial support and cooperation for the implementation of the Bali Strategic Plan.

32. *Mr. Fonseca (Brazil), Vice-Chairperson, took the Chair.*

33. **Ms. Toro** (Finland), speaking on behalf of the European Union; the acceding countries Bulgaria and Romania; the candidate countries Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia; the stabilization and association process countries Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia; and, in addition, Moldova and Ukraine, reiterated their firm commitment to the implementation of the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development and the 2005 World Summit. The Informal Consultative Process represented an important starting point in the process of creating a strong and efficient framework for environmental governance at the international level and should be resumed.

34. UNEP should be upgraded, with a revised mandate, and supported by stable, predictable financial contributions, operating on an equal footing with other United Nations agencies. As a specialized agency, UNEP would be better able to provide leadership in facing current and future environmental challenges.

35. The European Union supported the recommendation made by the Secretary-General in document A/61/258 for deeper commitment to sustainable development by redoubling efforts to implement Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation. In addition, it hoped for a successful outcome to the fifteenth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development, which was expected to achieve working policy solutions on the thematic cluster, as well as further insight into their interlinkages and impact on sustainable development.

36. Improved access to reliable and affordable energy was a critical factor in meeting the Millennium Development Goals, and the European Union wished to promote the integration of energy issues into national development plans. It encouraged others to follow its example with respect to setting national and regional targets for energy efficiency and for the share of renewable energies in energy supply and consumption. In terms of industrial development, efforts should be intensified to enhance sustainable consumption, production patterns and management of natural resources, and an integrated approach should be taken in tackling air pollution and climate change.

37. The European Union had worked for a long time with small island developing States to address environmental challenges and their particular vulnerabilities to climate change. Recent disasters had highlighted the need to develop and strengthen effective disaster risk reduction, early warning systems, emergency relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction capacities, adaptation measures and technology in those States.

38. The European Union welcomed the World Bank's Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and endorsed the processes under way to strengthen the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction system. It endorsed the Secretary-General's recommendation on the need for further investment in climate monitoring, and associated hazard risk management and risk reduction activities in coping with hydro-meteorological hazards and on the inclusion of disaster reduction in national climate change adaptation policies and programmes. The international community should develop tools to measure levels of investment in preparedness, particularly at the national level, and to integrate indigenous knowledge into the design and implementation of preparedness activities.

39. The European Union welcomed the outcome of the eleventh session of the Conference of the Parties to

the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol. New strategies should be explored in a manner that recognized the urgency of addressing climate change and the scale of action required. The European Union was also eager to discuss further commitments for developed countries under the Kyoto Protocol and to engage in a full review of the Protocol.

40. Climate policy should support other sustainable development goals and enhance cooperation for capacity-building, technology transfer and international assistance to help developing countries manage the impact of climate change and develop resilience. At the national level, measures to mitigate the impact of climate change, such as scaling up low carbon energy, would promote poverty reduction and the achievement of the Goals.

41. The current debate on strengthening the Convention to Combat Desertification and its implementation was of great significance, and further efforts should be made to tackle land degradation and its links to poverty. The seventh session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention, held in October 2005, had led to the formulation of a strategic vision for improving the implementation of the Convention in the following decade. To that end, the European Union was working with its partners in an intersessional working group. The global environment dimension of desertification and, consequently, the need for integrating the Rio Conventions in a mutually supportive approach should also be considered within a development perspective.

42. Women in poor rural areas disproportionately bore the burden and disadvantages of environmental degradation in performing their daily chores. They also had a special potential for fostering rural development because they worked with natural resources every day. The European Union therefore welcomed the international meetings held in China and Mali in 2006 on the role of women and young people in combating desertification.

43. Stressing the European Union's commitment to reducing the loss of biodiversity by 2010, she drew attention to the need to strengthen national conservation and the sustainable use of biodiversity, and to find ways and means to overcome obstacles, and assist in the implementation of national biodiversity strategies and action plans. In particular, support must be given, where applicable, to the integration of such plans into nationally owned development programmes and effective mechanisms established to monitor progress towards the 2010 target. It was noteworthy that, at the meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety held in March 2006, ministers and business leaders had established a dialogue for the first time. The European Union also recognized the key role of the Convention on Biological Diversity in supporting the work of the General Assembly on conservation and the sustainable use of marine biodiversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction.

44. Many participants in the ninth special session of the UNEP Governing Council had evidently felt the need for a more focused and clear role for UNEP as the environment pillar of the United Nations system. She welcomed the appointment of the Executive Director of UNEP and pledged the European Union's wholehearted support.

45. The adoption of the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management was a major achievement; the initial steps to rationalize and consolidate multilateral environmental agreements had been taken within the chemicals and wastes cluster. The European Union was also committed to participating in capacity-building strategies for developing countries in environmental protection, as a tool for strengthening international environmental governance.

46. In view of trends in urban development and their impact on the implementation of the Habitat Agenda, the European Union enthusiastically endorsed the Secretary-General's recommendation to accord high priority to the integration of slum improvement into national development and poverty reduction strategies for the attainment of the Goals.

47. **Mr. Hannesson** (Iceland) said that his delegation was satisfied with the outcome of the fourteenth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development and held high expectations for the Commission's policy session to be held in April and May 2007. The international community faced the challenge of finding a way to safeguard the world's ecosystems while raising the level of development and fostering economic growth. Over the long term, countries would have to reduce their dependence on fossil fuels and substantially expand the consumption of renewables.

48. An enabling policy framework and leadership were required to promote the use of renewable energy sources. International financial institutions should be encouraged to raise the profile of renewables in their lending strategies. His delegation had therefore been pleased to hear the announcement by the representative of the World Bank that the Bank was developing a Clean Energy Investment Framework to meet the challenge of securing affordable and cost-effective energy for growth while preserving the environment. His delegation also commended the World Bank for its plan to explore financing options to support investment in clean energy.

49. Geothermal energy and hydropower accounted for over 70 per cent of Iceland's primary energy consumption. His country had a long-standing commitment to international cooperation for the sustainable use of energy, and the Geothermal Training Programme of the United Nations University, hosted by Iceland, was valuable for sharing expertise with developing countries.

50. He underscored the importance of advancing progress in the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States. His delegation was pleased to note that regional infrastructure had been strengthened and that the three regions involved had all identified targets and priorities for implementation. It looked forward to studying the outcome of their work in a consolidated format, which would serve as a guide for cooperation in the successful implementation of the Strategy. The initial pledge his country had made in Mauritius to support implementation projects and programmes was the beginning of a fruitful partnership and cooperation on its part.

51. *Ms. Intelmann (Estonia) resumed the Chair.*

52. **Mr. Jenie** (Indonesia) noted the increasing awareness that the challenges of poverty alleviation, environmental protection and balanced development could be met only through concerted and coordinated global action. Although some progress had been made in many countries, one third of the world's population still lived in poverty. Considering the growing global demand for natural resources and the frequency of extreme weather phenomena and natural disasters, fulfilment of the Millennium Development Goals and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation was crucial for sustainable development. While there seemed to be a deepening commitment and renewed impetus to sustainable development at all levels, some risks remained. The Kyoto Protocol should be made fully operational to curb the impacts of climate change, particularly in the most vulnerable and disaster-prone countries.

53. Indonesia expressed deep appreciation to the international community for its continued support and looked forward to the completion of the early warning system. It was also important to continue supporting Indonesia's efforts in risk reduction, disaster management, awareness-raising and reconstruction and rehabilitation of Aceh and North Sumatra. Indonesia identified with the concerns and challenges of small island developing States. In the context of South-South cooperation, it had been working with those countries in the area of coastal management and was ready to support them in their implementation of the Mauritius Strategy. It had launched a national programme aimed at building the capacity of local governments to conserve natural resources and control environmental degradation. Indonesia attached great importance to the conservation and management of its biodiversity and was looking forward to the completion of the international regime on access and benefit sharing, one of the three pillars of the Convention on Biological Diversity. It was important for the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity-Building to be fully implemented through concrete actions with predictable, adequate and stable funding.

54. **Ms. Radu** (Moldova) said that her country's current priorities included implementation of the European Union Water Framework Directive, protection of its biodiversity, management of obsolete organic pollutants and effective land management. Several projects were being implemented accordingly. For example, Moldova would export a substantial amount of obsolete pollutants left over from the Soviet era for recycling and undertake another project to mitigate the organic pollution of its waters and of the Black Sea North-West region by protecting land against erosion and establishing waste management procedures in rural areas. It was a member of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe and had been the first country to ratify the Aarhus Convention on providing citizens with information on environmental issues. It used the mechanisms of the Helsinki Convention on the Protection and Use of

Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes to establish modern-style relations with neighbours with whom it shared watercourses.

55. At the national level, Moldova was trying to enrich its forest coverage through tree planting and protection of wetlands. A new law was expected to be passed to help protect its biodiversity. Despite those efforts, it still faced many challenges, such as the non-integration of environmental issues into economic and social policies, poverty, corruption and lack of awareness among decision makers of the Johannesburg Summit decisions. However, the Government and many environmental NGOs had been making efforts to improve that situation.

56. **Mr. Severin** (Saint Lucia), speaking on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS), said that, given the special difficulties they faced in achieving sustainable development, AOSIS countries continued to attach the highest priority to the Mauritius Strategy. The report of the Secretary-General (A/61/277) acknowledged those countries' readiness to take measures to continue implementing the Strategy at the national and regional levels and noted that greater efforts should be made to mainstream issues related to those countries in the programmes of the relevant organizations and bodies of the United Nations system. AOSIS had held regional meetings to consider the global programme to operationalize the Strategy. It welcomed efforts made at the Inter-Regional Meeting held in Rome the previous year to decide on common action to implement the Strategy. Various regional organizations had been identified to provide the necessary support for monitoring implementation. AOSIS urged its development partners and the broader international community to commit the resources necessary to bolster those organizations. It welcomed the decision of the Commission on Sustainable Development to dedicate one day of its sessions every other year to reviewing the implementation of the Strategy and strongly encouraged the Commission to continue emphasizing issues pertaining to small island developing States at review sessions.

57. While the AOSIS countries bore the primary responsibility for their sustainable development, expressed commitments by the international community must be matched by determined action based on the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities in respect of sustainable development. AOSIS acknowledged the ongoing efforts of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs to operationalize the Strategy and called on all relevant agencies of the United Nations system to work with and support the Department in those efforts.

58. Efforts were needed to improve the capacity of small island developing States for research, data collection and analysis and other technical competencies, in order to facilitate the formulation and implementation of public policies and programmes for their sustainable development. In that regard, AOSIS welcomed the efforts to promote new and renewable sources of energy. Constantly rising oil prices and market instability, inefficiencies in energy generation and transmission and almost total dependence on fossil fuels were major sources of economic vulnerability for AOSIS countries. They therefore counted on the support of international partners in their ongoing efforts to develop policies and programmes to foster the use of renewable energy and lessen the impact of climate change.

59. Preparatory action in small island developing States to deal with extreme weather phenomena attributable to climate change would enhance the prospects for an effective response before, during and after serious weather conditions and other natural disasters. Various national and regional projects to address the challenges and threats of climate change were under way. At the international level, AOSIS urged all countries to support the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Kyoto Protocol and called on developed countries to express their full support for efforts to give prominence to the Strategy.

60. While the establishment of the upgraded Central Emergency Response Fund was a positive development, there was still a need for improved and rapid humanitarian response, especially with regard to financing, to ensure that funds were readily available and disbursed in a timely manner to disaster-stricken countries. AOSIS expressed gratitude to the Small Island Developing States Unit in the Department of Economic and Social Affairs for facilitating the preparatory process for its regional and interregional meetings the previous year. It reiterated the need for the urgent strengthening of the Unit. It also expressed concern about the deterioration of the Small Island Developing States Information Network and continued to press for its revitalization and strengthening.

61. **Mr. Torrington** (Guyana), speaking on behalf of the Rio Group, said that the Group's members stood ready to participate constructively in the fifteenth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development. The next Intergovernmental Preparatory Meeting should continue to discuss policy issues identified in the review year. The four issues under discussion were all important and should be treated on an equal footing and in a balanced manner, taking into account the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development. Since the fifteenth session would be a negotiating session, the Chairman's negotiating document should be available at the beginning of the session at the latest. The Group would like to maintain the practice of separate reports on cluster issues in order for each issue to be treated in its entirety. It highlighted the importance of the preparatory process at the regional level for the main sessions of the Commission and of the intergovernmental character of the process.

62. The Group reiterated its commitment to the three objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity and fully supported the declaration of 2010 as the International Year of Biodiversity. In that context, there was a need for fair and equitable sharing of the benefits of genetic resources and for the conclusion of negotiations on a binding international regime on access and benefit-sharing at the tenth session of the Conference of the Parties. The Group supported the work of the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Access and Benefit-Sharing and encouraged it to strive for a just and fair agreement.

63. The Group welcomed the adoption of the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management and reiterated the need to support developing countries in strengthening their capacity for the sound management of chemicals and hazardous wastes. While the adoption of the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity-building was a positive step, the Plan faced serious constraints in its implementation, due mainly to limited financial resources.

64. The Group was concerned that lives and resources were lost every year owing to natural disasters and noted the importance of scientific and technological cooperation to help its countries develop early warning systems, contingency plans and adaptation strategies. The adverse effects of climate change represented a serious challenge for the sustainable development of its region. The clean development mechanism of the Kyoto Protocol was a step in the right direction, even though capacity-building and advisory services were needed to successfully design and obtain approval of relevant projects. Desertification and land degradation were other serious threats, with potentially devastating effects in terms of social, environmental and economic costs.

65. The Group was committed to the implementation of the Convention to Combat Desertification and had organized awareness-raising events in connection with the International Year of Deserts and Desertification. It welcomed the establishment of the Caribbean Sea Commission by the Association of Caribbean States and encouraged the international community to support endeavours to promote the Caribbean Sea Initiative.

66. **Mr. Sadykov** (Kazakhstan) said that implementation of the programmes and targets adopted at the World Summit on Sustainable Development was of paramount importance.

67. Energy played a critical role in reducing poverty, ensuring sustainable development and achieving the Millennium Development Goals. Because energy supplies based on fossil fuels would continue to play a dominant role, efforts were needed to develop cleaner technologies and more effective exploration methods with respect to such fuels. Additional cooperation to eliminate gas flaring and venting would contribute significantly to reducing greenhouse gas emissions, conserving energy and ensuring increased energy supplies.

68. Both the plan of action on global energy security adopted at the Group of Eight Summit held in July 2006 in Saint Petersburg and the inauguration that same month of the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline for the export of crude oil would make valuable contributions towards meeting world energy requirements and other key objectives relating to the environment and development. It was important for developed countries to help developing countries to diversify their energy technologies and equipment in order to enable them to reduce their dependence on fossil fuels.

69. He drew attention to initiatives his country had introduced to diversify its economy in a manner consistent with sustainable development, improve energy efficiency and develop alternative sources of

energy. In addition, a code harmonizing national environmental law with international norms was slated for adoption in 2006.

70. His Government attached considerable importance to international cooperation in implementing the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and was in the process of ratifying the Kyoto Protocol to the Convention. Wider use of the Protocol's clean development mechanism would boost national efforts to develop ecologically friendly and effective energy resources, and the mechanism should be simplified.

71. **Mr. Karanja** (Kenya) said that his delegation welcomed the fact that the various stakeholders had embraced sustainable development initiatives globally. It also welcomed initiatives being taken in his country by foreign companies in partnership with his Government and Kenyan companies under the clean development mechanism. Governments should play the lead role and encourage the involvement of other stakeholders. The achievement of sustainable development required full implementation of the commitments made in that regard by the international community.

72. Desertification, which continued to pose serious challenges to sustainable development, had not received due attention. The international community should support the efforts of countries seriously affected by drought and desertification, including by ratifying and fully implementing the Convention to Combat Desertification.

73. His Government reaffirmed its commitment to the implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcome of the World Summit on Sustainable Development. It had undertaken various relevant legislative reforms following consultative and participatory processes involving key stakeholders and civil society organizations. The many challenges ahead could be addressed through renewed political will and the establishment of genuine partnerships to promote sustainable development.

74. The United Nations regional commissions should be strengthened so that they would be in a position to provide effective support for sustainable development, as called for in the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation.

75. UNEP must be strengthened gradually in order not to place immediate demands on the United Nations system and Member States, and should retain its current mandate. All Member States should participate in the process. The work of UNEP was being severely hampered by a lack of reliable financial support. The General Assembly should increase the regular budget resources available to the Programme. The failure to reach a decision on the issue of establishing universal membership of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum would continue to divert attention from pressing environmental issues as well as time and resources of Member States, and a final decision should be reached as soon as possible. His delegation called for the full implementation of the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity-building, which was a milestone in the work of UNEP.

76. **Mr. Shamanov** (Russian Federation) said that the work of the Commission on Sustainable Development should lead to the development of balanced and practically oriented political decisions. Practical decisions by the Commission on the issue of energy security would be an important contribution to the joint efforts of the international community on the indissolubly linked issues of climate and energy security.

77. His delegation had noted with satisfaction the outcome of the ninth special session of UNEP, in February 2006. The Programme had been given a new impetus in terms of qualitatively improving its work through the efforts of its new Executive Director, Mr. Achim Steiner. Work on protection of the environment had to be carried out within the intergovernmental process, with the participation of all Member States and on the basis of consensus; it was essential to integrate into that process consideration of the future recommendations of the High-level Panel on United Nations System-wide Coherence in the Areas of Development, Humanitarian Assistance and the Environment.

78. The Russian Federation had traditionally given priority attention to the Global Forest Agenda, and supported the outcome of the sixth session of the United Nations Forum on Forests. On the issue of global climate protection, it was expedient to utilize all forms of cooperation, with the widest possible participation, including the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Kyoto

Protocol. Belarus had committed itself to a 5 per cent reduction in its greenhouse gas emissions in the period 2008-2012. The Russian Federation welcomed and supported that initiative and was convinced that measures to counteract climate change had to be based on the common efforts of all countries in proportion to their real opportunities and influence on climate change. Noting with general satisfaction the outcome of the eleventh session of the Conference of the Parties to the Framework Convention and the first Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol, the Russian Federation considered that the second Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol, to be held in Nairobi in November 2006 in conjunction with the twelfth session of the Conference of the Parties to the Framework Convention, would give practical impetus to the joint efforts of the international community on all three of its basic negotiating tracks. The Russian Federation favoured reinforcing the scientific basis of climate cooperation, developing the relevant global networks for observation, monitoring and improving forecasting.

79. The Russian Federation supported implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Convention to Combat Desertification, and considered it necessary to improve coordination and constructive interaction between the two Conventions and other international conventions and structures. It had noted with interest the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (A/61/229), and welcomed proposals to reform the Strategy system in the spirit of the Hyogo Framework for Action, 2005-2015. Activity in the area of disaster reduction must in the first instance involve the relevant organizations in the area of development, which themselves operated at country level and at the request of Governments.

80. **Mr. Bialek** (Australia) said that his country strongly supported the work of the United Nations on sustainable development and was particularly pleased that it would be representing the Group of Western European and Other States on the Bureau of the Commission on Sustainable Development at its fifteenth session.

81. Progress in the areas of energy, industrial development, air pollution and climate change would occur only if countries worked towards integrated solutions. Political stability, effective political and institutional governance and a policy environment conducive to growth, along with partnerships between Governments and the private sector, were essential for achieving sustainable development.

82. Collaborative partnerships between countries were equally important, particularly on energy policy, in order to enable countries with smaller economies to adopt new ideas and best practices, promote local innovation and create an environment conducive to the development and use of new technologies. Australia was actively involved in a number of partnerships, including the Asia-Pacific Partnership on Clean Development and Climate.

83. In keeping with its commitment to helping its partner countries achieve sustainable development by addressing environmental challenges, Australia was developing a new environment strategy for its aid programme focusing on climate change and adaptation, water and environmental regulatory regimes.

84. His country was participating actively in ongoing efforts in various forums to improve the framework for international environmental governance, and believed that environment, sustainable development and natural resource management must be mainstreamed into the development programmes of the United Nations. It therefore welcomed the efforts of UNEP under the Bali Strategic Plan to mainstream environmental concerns and rationalize programme delivery in coordination with UNDP. Australia also awaited with interest the outcome of the deliberations of the High-level Panel on UN System-wide Coherence in the Areas of Development, Humanitarian Assistance and the Environment.

85. **Mr. González Pérez** (Cuba) said that an unequal and unjust world economic and financial system, which was a product of neoliberal economics, continued to hinder the implementation of sustainable development strategies, seriously undermining economic development, social equality and environmental protection. He cited statistics illustrating the severity of the continuing deterioration of the environment and of the heavy toll it was taking in the developing world, all at a time when military expenditures continued to skyrocket.

86. Inadequate financial resources, technology transfers and support for capacity-building continued to prevent the developing countries from achieving the objectives of Agenda 21, the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation and the Millennium Development

Goals. Moreover, there was no clear sign that the developed countries had the intention or political will required to redress that situation, and they refused even to acknowledge the important principle of common but differentiated responsibility for climate protection. It was therefore imperative that the developed countries fulfil their commitments to devote 0.7 per cent of GDP to ODA, grant the products of developing countries greater access to their markets, transfer and share know-how and cutting-edge technologies, and refrain from evading their responsibilities. Bilateral and subregional arrangements to promote sustainable development should not be a substitute for multilateral international cooperation to that end.

87. His delegation urged the international community to devote particular attention to the needs of small island developing States, whose economic situation had deteriorated significantly owing to drastic cuts in ODA and unforeseen natural disasters.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.